Role of social media in Political Awareness and Political Participation an Empirical Study of Dibrugarh District

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Abstract:

How we talk to one another and engage with others has been revolutionised by social media. It has also altered people's participation in political life. The advent of social media has drastically altered human interaction. The way voters participate in elections has also been affected. The consequences of the results with special reference to Dibrugarh District has been discussed, and directions for further study are suggested. These findings demonstrate the powerful influence that social media platforms have on individuals' ability to keep up with current political events and take part in them. In comparison to individuals who don't use social media, those who do tend to be more politically engaged and knowledgeable.

According to the research, social media may be a useful platform for political mobilisation and can encourage individuals to engage in political discourse and debate. on individuals' ability to keep up with current political events and take part in them. In comparison to individuals who don't use social media, those who do tend to be more politically engaged and knowledgeable.

Keywords: social media, Political awareness, Participation, Dibrugarh, Reliability, T-test, Regression

1. Introduction

For many individuals in the modern world, social media platforms are indispensable. In India, social media has emerged as a vital space for political discourse, education, and engagement.

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It's because to social media that individuals, political groups, and politicians are able to communicate and collaborate on issues, debates, and campaigns. The purpose of this research is to determine whether or not the prevalence of social media in Dibrugarh, Assam has increased residents' access to political information and their propensity to become politically engaged. It's no secret that politicians, activists, and regular citizens are all using social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to disseminate information, coordinate activities, and mobilise people around political topics. The study's overarching objective is to dissect the ways in which online social networks influence citizens' ability to participate in and learn about their communities.

Political Awareness in India

If you want to be considered politically savvy, you need to know your way around political issues, policies, and processes. It's safe to argue that the proliferation of social media has played a significant role in increasing people in India's awareness of political issues. The widespread use of social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp has led to a rise in political awareness and participation. Social media has made it easier for political groups and politicians to get their messages out to voters.

The Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) found that young adults in India rely on social media as their main source of political news. Eighty percent of those surveyed reported engaging in political discourse on social media. As a result, Facebook and Twitter and other social media platforms are becoming indispensable to journalists covering political events.

Citizens' ability to take part in political conversations and debates on social media has contributed to a broader understanding of political issues. Citizens may now interact with their elected officials and discuss pressing political topics through social media. The role of social media in shaping public opinion on political issues, policies, and processes has grown in recent years.

Political Participation in India

Voting, protesting, and joining political parties are all examples of how individuals may participate politically. Social media has dramatically increased voter participation in India. Citizen engagement in political campaigns and rallies has been facilitated by people' increased accessibility to political parties, candidates, and leaders through social media.

Voter turnout in India has increased in large part due to the influence of social media, according to research by the "Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)". Research conducted during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections shows that political parties and candidates made substantial use of social media. Voter turnout, information sharing, and interpersonal connections were all boosted by the usage of social media.

The rise of young people's involvement in politics may also be attributed in large part to the rise of social media. Social media has enabled young people to connect with political parties, candidates, and leaders, making it easier for them to participate in political campaigns and rallies. Social media has also enabled young people to engage in political discussions and debates, which has led to increased political awareness and participation.

Impact of social media on Indian Politics

Social media has had a major effect on Indian politics. Social media has enabled political parties and candidates to reach out to a broader audience and communicate their messages directly to the people. Social media has also enabled citizens to connect with political parties, candidates, and leaders, making it easier for them to participate in political campaigns and rallies.

When it comes to public opinion on political problems, policies, and procedures, social media has been a major player. Political knowledge and engagement have both risen as a result of people' enhanced ability to discuss and debate political issues on social media. The rise of young people's involvement in politics is also largely attributable to the rise of social media. As a result of the rise of social media, Indian politicians face new difficulties. For India's democratic system, the proliferation of disinformation and hoaxes on social media is a growing cause for worry. There has been an increase in communal tension throughout the nation because certain people are using social media to disseminate hate speech and encourage violence.

The study's overarching objective is to dissect the ways in which online social networks influence citizens' ability to participate in and learn about their communities. We'll see whether being involved in politics is negatively correlated with social media use.

2. Review of Literature:

Social media's impact on politics has been the subject of a lot of research and writing. Communication, mobilisation, and participation in politics are all improved by the use of social media (Delli Carpini& Keeter, 1996; Putnam, 2000; Shirky, 2008). Social media can

facilitate political discussions and debates among citizens, which can increase political awareness and encourage political participation (Delli Carpini& Keeter, 1996; Putnam, 2000; Shirky, 2008). Social media can also provide a platform for political activists and organizations to organize and mobilize people around political issues (Bimber et al., 2005; Chadwick, 2006).

In recent years, political campaigns have increasingly used social media. Communicating political messages, rallying followers, and bringing attention to political concerns are all common uses for social media. There have been a number of studies looking at how social media usage affects civic engagement and knowledge.

Using social media was proven to improve both political literacy and participation, according to one research (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). Social media users were shown to have a higher propensity for political engagement, as measured by engagement with others' political content, as well as participation in political events and action. Another research indicated that young individuals who utilise social media are more likely to vote (Bennett &Segerberg, 2012). Young individuals who participated in political activities like petition signing, attending demonstrations, and contacting their representatives were more likely to use social media, according to the research.

Some research has also looked at how the use of social media may lead to greater political participation. According to the results of one research, social media may serve as a powerful mechanism for public mobilisation on political concerns (Delli Carpini& Keeter, 1996). The study found that the public was more mobilised after using social media because more people had access to and were better informed about political issues. Different research indicated that social media may be utilised to get people excited about certain policy problems (Gerber, Karlan, & Bergan, 2009). Based on the results of the research, it seems that social media may be utilised to reach out to certain subsets of the population and motivate them to engage with policy concerns.

The influence of social media on public discourse and policy debates has also been studied. Recent research indicated that social media may serve as a platform for individuals to engage in political discourse and debate (Shirky, 2008). According to the results of the research, social media may serve as a venue for individuals to voice their opinions, disseminate news, and discuss political issues with one another. Deliberative democracy, in which people have

open, thoughtful debates on important issues, has been shown to benefit from the usage of social media, according to another research (Fishkin & Luskin, 2005).

(J. C. Baumgartner 2008) In this research, we look at how shows like The Daily Show, which use humour to poke fun at politics, may influence viewers to get more involved in the democratic process. The results indicate that exposure to these shows increases political literacy, engagement, and effectiveness. Viewers of political comedy shows were also shown to be more inclined to have political conversations with their peers.

(Bimber and Davis, 2003). This book examines the impact of the internet on electoral processes in the United States in great detail. It delves at the ways in which campaigns are use the web to enlist supporters, amass financial backing, and keep in touch with voters. The book also looks at how the internet has changed political involvement and activism.

This is according to (Hindman, M. The idea that the internet is democratising politics is one that is contested in this book. While the author acknowledges the internet's potential to expand political engagement, she also claims it is aiding in the further polarisation of politics and the exclusion of some groups. This book examines the influence of the internet on civic engagement and activism.

(Loader, B. D., &Mercea, D., 2011). The purpose of this research is to determine whether and how the use of social media may stimulate more people to become involved in politics. According to the results, social media may be an effective medium for public mobilisation and the promotion of fruitful political debates. However, the study also highlights the challenges associated with social media use in politics, such as the risk of information overload and the potential for polarization.

(Stromer-Galley, J., 2014). This book provides a comprehensive analysis of how political campaigns are using the internet to mobilize voters and communicate with the electorate. It looks at how modern tools like social networking, online advertising, and online voter registration have changed the face of politics. The book also explores the potential downsides and challenges associated with internet use in politics.

3. **Objective**:

The study will examine the following objectives:

1.Impact of social media on political awareness and Participation

2. Implications of social media for political mobilization and citizen engagement

4. **Methodology:**

A survey was conducted among 100 respondents from residents of Dibrugarh District through a self-administrated questionnaire. The primary data was collected through stratified random sampling technique. The responses were collected and then analysed using SPSS V27 to find out the required regression. The reliability and validity of questionnaire will be calculated using Cronbach's alpha.

In the "research, to reveal the Role of social media in Political Awareness and Political Participation, the mean and standard deviation were compared with the t-test for difference significance by gender and relationships between social media and political awareness and participation were analysed by Pearson correlation test."

The survey was designed to measure the following variables:

Political awareness: This variable was measured using questions that assessed the level of knowledge that respondents had about political issues and events in their country and around the world.

Political participation: This variable was measured using questions that assessed the extent to which respondents participated in political activities such as voting, attending political rallies, and signing petitions.

Social media use: This variable was measured using questions that assessed the frequency and type of social media platforms that respondents used.

5. Results & Findings:

Table 1:

Reliability:

Case Processing Summary			N
Cases	Valid		100
	Excluded[a]		0
	Total		100

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.994	20

The Reliability Statistics for this questionnaire is significantly positive as the Cronbach's alpha is 0.994.

Table 2:

Demographic:

	Variables	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	18-24	25	25.0	25.0	25.0
	25-34	20	20.0	20.0	45.0
Age	35-44	20	20.0	20.0	65.0
	45-54	15	15.0	15.0	80.0
	55 or older	20	20.0	20.0	100.0
Gender	Male	55	55.0	55.0	55.0
	Female	45	45.0	45.0	100.0
	High School	20	20.0	20.0	20.0
Standard	Higher Secondary	25	25.0	25.0	45.0
	Bachelor's degree	40	40.0	40.0	85.0
	Master's degree	15	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Student	20	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Professional	15	15.0	15.0	35.0
Occupation	Service	25	25.0	25.0	60.0
	Self-employed	30	30.0	30.0	90.0
	Retired	10	10.0	10.0	100.0

The research was carried out with the respondents of residents of Dibrugarh District. To determine the profile of the respondents, demographic questions were asked and we can say that 25% respondents were of age 18 to 24 years, 20% of the respondents were of age 25 to 34 years, a number of respondents that is 20% work from the 35 to 44 years of age group, another 15% respondents were of age 45 to 54 and rest 20% were 55 years or above. Talking about the general profile "55% of the respondents were male and 45% of the respondents were female." Talking about the Education level of the respondents, 20(20%) respondents responded High School, 25(25%) respondents responded Higher Secondary and 40(40%) respondents responded Bachelor's degree whereas 15(15%) respondents responded Master's

degree. Also, the respondents were asked about their occupation and 20(20%) respondents responded Student, 15(15%) respondents responded Professional, 25(25%) respondents responded Service and 30(30%) respondents responded Self-employed and "10(10%) respondents responded Retired.

Table 3:

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
How often do you use social media?	Daily	35	35.0	35.0	35.0
	A few times a week	35	35.0	35.0	70.0
	Once a week	10	10.0	10.0	80.0
	A few times a month	15	15.0	15.0	95.0
	Rarely or never	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
Do you feel that social media has increased your political awareness?	Strongly Agree	30	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Agree	25	25.0	25.0	55.0
	Neutral	20	20.0	20.0	75.0
	Disagree	15	15.0	15.0	90.0
	Strongly Agree	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
Have you ever participated in a political discussion or debate on social media	Frequently	20	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Occasionally	30	30.0	30.0	50.0
	Rarely	30	30.0	30.0	80.0
	Never	15	15.0	15.0	95.0
	N/A, I don't use social media	5	5.0	5.0	100.0

The investigation yielded the information shown in the aforementioned graph and table, indicating that 100 respondents were used to compile the sample. If asked how frequently they use social media, 35% of people said daily." In a typical day, 35 people (or 35% of the total) answer the survey. Ten percent of respondents (10%) did so weekly or more often. 15

(15%) of weekly responses were active participants. Five percent of those surveyed answered at least monthly It happens very seldom, if at all. In response to the question, "Has the use of social media led to an increase in people's political awareness? 30% strongly agreed, 25% agreed, 20% were neutral, 15% disagreed, and 10% were very agreed. Respondents were also asked how often they engage in political debates on social media"; 20% said "often," 30% said "sometimes," 30% said "rarely," 15% said "never," and 5% said "not applicable," I don't use social media.

Table 4:

Regression:

Regression results for the "Impact of Social media on Political awareness and Political Participation"

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression Analysis	Regression	197.383	3	65.794	411.033	.000[b]
	Residual	15.367	96	0.160		
	Total	212.750	99			

According to the table 4 , there is a significant impact of Social media on Political awareness and Political Participation" (F= 411.033). It's also true that as social media use grows, so does people's interest in politics and their willingness to become involved in government. The aforementioned regression table is reflected in the normal probability map shown below.

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual
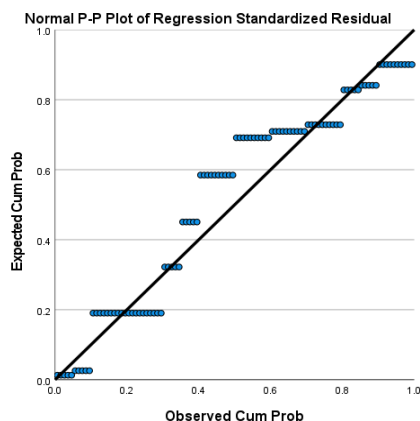
6. Implications and Recommendations

Implications:

Based on the literature review, the following implications can be drawn:

1. Leaders and political parties should utilise social media to engage the people and encourage more participation in the electoral process.

2. Challenges and possible drawbacks of social media usage in politics, such as the possibility of disinformation and divisiveness, should be addressed. The creation of regulations and norms for the use of social media in politics, together with educational and awareness-raising activities, may help accomplish this goal.

3. Citizen engagement and participation should be encouraged through social media platforms. This can be achieved through the development of online tools and platforms that facilitate political discussions and debates, as well as through the promotion of online activism and citizen journalism.

Recommendations:

Following an analysis of the available research, we propose the following changes:

1. Political leaders and parties should develop a social media strategy that takes into account the potential benefits and risks of social media use in politics. This strategy should include guidelines for social media use and should emphasize the importance of promoting political awareness and participation.

2. Efforts should be made to promote media literacy and critical thinking skills among citizens, in order to help them navigate the potential pitfalls of social media and distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources of information.

3. Citizen engagement and participation should be encouraged through the development of online tools and platforms that facilitate political discussions and debates. These tools should be designed to encourage constructive dialogue and discourage hate speech and other forms of online abuse.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that social media has contributed greatly to the rise of civic engagement and political literacy in India. Citizen engagement in political campaigns and rallies has been facilitated by people' increased accessibility to political parties, candidates,

and leaders through social media. More individuals are engaged in politics now that political debate is so easily accessible on social media. The proliferation of social networking sites is also substantially responsible for the increased political engagement of young people.

However, new challenges have arisen with the growth of social media in Indian politics. These include the spread of fake news and misinformation, hate speech, and incitement to violence. The best way to deal with these problems is to improve the regulation and oversight of social media sites. Political parties and candidates should utilise social media with greater moderation and refrain from spreading misinformation, inciting hatred, or calling for violence. On the whole, social media has altered India's political system, and its influence is only expected to increase in the years to come. Social media platforms already play a significant role in political communication, political knowledge, and political involvement in India, and this role is only expected to grow as technology advances. As a result, it is crucial to respond to the threats presented by social media while also capitalising on its opportunities to fortify democracy in India.

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